

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 6-8, 11, 12, 23 and 24 are now pending in the application, with Claims 6 and 7 being independent. Claims 1-5, 9, 10 and 13-22 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 6-8, 11 and 12 have been amended and Claims 23 and 24 have been added herein.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 6-8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In keeping with this indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended Claims 6 and 7 into independent form, with minor changes thereto. The changes are not believed to affect the allowability of the claims and have not been made for any reasons related to patentability. In addition, Claims 11 and 12 have been amended to depend from Claim 6 and new Claims 23 and 24 depend from Claim 7. Consequently, these claims are seen to be in condition for allowance.

The Office Action entered rejections of Claims 1-5 and 9-22 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103. Most of these claims have been cancelled, and the remaining claims are seen to be in condition for allowance for the reasons noted above. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance. In particular, it is Applicants' current intention to file a divisional application to pursue the subject matter of the rejected claims.

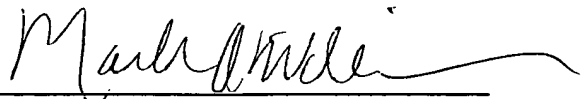
Thus, Claims 6-8, 11, 12, 23 and 24 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by Claims 6-8, 11, 12, 23 and 24.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Williamson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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